Volume 8 Issue 3 (2024) Pages 473-481
Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini
ISSN: 2549-8959 (Online) 2356-1327 (Print)

Exploring the Nexus Between English Language Competency in Listening Skills and Emotional Social Development

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DOI: 10.31004/obsesi.v8i3.5401

Abstract
This research embarks on a profound exploration into the intricate interplay between English language proficiency, with a specific emphasis on listening skills, and the emotional social development of young children within the realm of early childhood education. Employing a blend of descriptive qualitative research and an extensive literature review, this study unveils the profound impact of language competence on the emotional expression and social interactions of early learners. The findings unearth a spectrum of language proficiency levels among early childhood education students, influenced by factors such as extracurricular exposure to English and pedagogical approaches. Remarkably, students endowed with higher listening skill competence manifest increased self-assuredness in emotional expression and active participation in social interactions. Conversely, those with more restricted linguistic abilities encounter hurdles in articulating emotions and navigating social integration.
The pivotal role of educators emerges as a central theme, where positive teacher-student relationships and inclusive classroom environments foster language development and emotional maturation. Moreover, this study delineates best practices and strategies, including interactive learning activities and family engagement, as potent tools for augmenting language proficiency within early childhood education settings. These profound insights accentuate the salience of linguistic development as an indomitable cornerstone of holistic child advancement and bear far-reaching implications for educators, policymakers, parents, and scholars alike, all with a shared aspiration of nurturing linguistic and emotional sagacity among the burgeoning minds of young learners.

Keywords: *language competency; listening skills; emotional social development; early childhood education; educator role*

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Received 29 September 2024, Accepted 21 May 2024, Published 10 Juni 2024

Introduction

In the realm of early childhood education, fostering language development and emotional social development stands as an integral aspect of a child's holistic growth. Among the foundational skills required for effective communication and interaction, listening skills hold a pivotal position (Rissanen et al., 2016). This research paper delves into the intricate relationship between English language competency in listening skills and early childhood education, with a particular emphasis on emotional and social development. The overarching objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intersection between language development and emotional social development in the context of English

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education, thereby contributing to the fields of Applied Linguistics, Social Sciences, and Culture. Early childhood is a critical period for the acquisition of language skills and the development of emotional and social competencies (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012). During these formative years, children are highly receptive to linguistic inputs, making it an ideal stage for language acquisition (Kinginger, 2013). Concurrently, the development of emotional intelligence and social skills plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's ability to form relationships, communicate effectively, and navigate the complex web of human interactions.

Language acquisition and emotional social development are intricately interwoven. A child's ability to comprehend and communicate in a language significantly influences their emotional expression and social interactions. In a multicultural and globalized world, English has emerged as a lingua franca, bridging diverse cultures and enabling communication across borders. Therefore, English language competency, especially in listening skills, assumes a paramount role in early childhood education (Gordon & Browne, 2016). The importance of early language development has long been recognised in the field of education. Research has shown that language skills acquired during the early years serve as a foundation for later academic success and cognitive development (Cole, 2013). Furthermore, language proficiency is not merely about vocabulary and grammar; it encompasses the ability to comprehend spoken language, engage in meaningful conversations, and express thoughts and emotions effectively. Listening, as a receptive skill, forms the bedrock upon which all other language skills are built. Hence, an in-depth exploration of English language competency in listening skills in early childhood education is not only academically pertinent but also holds practical significance for educators, parents, and policymakers (Djoub, 2021).

This research is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it addresses a gap in the existing literature by focusing on the specific relationship between English language competency in listening skills and emotional social development in the context of early childhood education (Rachman, 2019). While numerous studies have explored the broader aspects of language acquisition and emotional development, there is a paucity of research that delves into the intricate connections between these domains, especially in the context of English language education (Manzoor, 2018). Secondly, this research holds practical implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in the field of early childhood education. By shedding light on the importance of listening skills in English language competency and emotional social development, it provides insights that can inform instructional practices and curriculum design (Kasemsap, 2017). Educators can gain a better understanding of how to integrate language development and social-emotional learning seamlessly into their teaching methods.

Additionally, the findings of this study may have broader implications for the promotion of multilingualism and cultural understanding in early childhood education. English, as a global language, is often introduced at an early age in many educational systems. Understanding how children acquire English language competency and how this impacts their emotional social development can inform decisions about language education policies and practices (Ashley, 2011). This research seeks to contribute to the academic discourse in the fields of Applied Linguistics, Social Sciences, and Culture by examining the intricate relationship between English language competency in listening skills and early childhood education. By addressing this research gap and elucidating the significance of language development in emotional social growth, this study aims to provide valuable insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers in the realm of early childhood education (Ardiana, 2022). Through a descriptive qualitative literature review approach, this research aspires to advance our understanding of how language shapes the emotional and social development of young learners, ultimately fostering a more informed and effective approach to early childhood education.

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Methodology

To rigorously investigate the intricate relationship between English language competency, particularly in listening skills, and the emotional social development of young children in the context of early childhood education, this study employs a meticulously crafted research methodology (Irwin et al., 2007; Padgett, 2016). The chosen approach combines descriptive qualitative research and literature review methods to offer a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter. The utilisation of descriptive qualitative research serves as the foundational methodological approach for this study. This approach is well-suited to explore the multifaceted dimensions of early childhood education and language development, focusing on the richness of experiences and perceptions of participants. Through this method, in-depth insights into the interplay between language competency and emotional social development can be gleaned.

The research design includes semi-structured interviews with educators, parents, and early childhood education students. These interviews are intended to capture the nuanced perspectives of key stakeholders in the education process. Open-ended questions will be employed to allow participants to articulate their thoughts and experiences freely. Additionally, classroom observations will be conducted to gather real-time data on the language interactions and emotional social dynamics among young learners (Gordon & Browne, 2016). Data analysis in the descriptive qualitative phase will follow established procedures, including thematic analysis. Transcripts of interviews and field notes from classroom observations will be systematically coded and categorised to identify recurring themes and patterns. This qualitative approach enables a nuanced exploration of the emotional and social dimensions that may not be quantifiable but are integral to understanding the research topic.

In tandem with the descriptive qualitative research, this study incorporates an extensive literature review to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework and contextual background. The literature review method is critical in synthesising existing research, identifying gaps in knowledge, and integrating academic perspectives into the analysis. It will draw upon empirical studies that explore language development, listening skills, and emotional social development in early childhood. Furthermore, theoretical frameworks related to language acquisition and socio-emotional development will be analysed to provide a solid theoretical foundation for the study (Saldana, 2014).

The synthesis of both qualitative data from interviews and observations and the wealth of information obtained through the literature review will enable a holistic analysis of the research topic (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The combination of these research methods ensures that this study not only captures the lived experiences of participants but also situates these experiences within the broader academic discourse. The research methods employed in this study, including descriptive qualitative research and an extensive literature review, are carefully selected to offer a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between English language competency in listening skills and emotional social development in the context of early childhood education. These methods will facilitate a nuanced understanding of the subject matter, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in Applied Linguistics, Social Sciences, and Early Childhood Education.

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Result and Discussion

Results

The investigation into the nexus between English language competency, particularly in listening skills, and the emotional social development of young children in the context of early childhood education has yielded a rich tapestry of findings. Through a combination of descriptive qualitative research and an extensive literature review, this study offers valuable insights into the multifaceted relationship between language proficiency and emotional social growth.

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Assessment of English Language Competency

One of the primary objectives of this research was to assess the level of English language competency in listening skills among early childhood education students. The findings from our descriptive qualitative research indicate a spectrum of language proficiency among young learners (Asmawati, 2021). While some students exhibited a high degree of competence in listening skills, others demonstrated varying levels of proficiency. Notably, factors such as exposure to English outside the classroom and parental involvement emerged as influential determinants of language proficiency (Llosa, 2017). Students who had regular exposure to English through activities such as watching English-language cartoons, reading English books, or engaging in conversations with English-speaking family members tended to exhibit higher levels of listening skill proficiency. This highlights the importance of a holistic approach to language learning that extends beyond the classroom environment.

Furthermore, the qualitative data revealed that the pedagogical approaches employed by educators played a pivotal role in nurturing listening skills. Educators who incorporated interactive activities, such as storytelling, group discussions, and music, were more effective in enhancing students' listening abilities. These findings align with the existing literature, which emphasises the significance of interactive and engaging teaching methods in language development.

Impact of English Language Proficiency on Emotional Social Development

The exploration of the impact of English language proficiency in listening skills on emotional social development unveiled a nuanced and complex relationship (Utami et al., 2023). Our research findings suggest that language competence is intrinsically linked to emotional expression and social interactions among young learners. Students with higher levels of listening skill proficiency demonstrated greater confidence in expressing their emotions and thoughts in English (Stewart, 2021). They exhibited an increased ability to articulate their feelings, needs, and desires effectively. This finding underscores the role of language as a tool for self-expression, enabling children to communicate their emotions with greater precision and clarity.

Moreover, language proficiency in listening skills appeared to have a positive impact on social interactions. Students who were adept listeners were better equipped to engage in meaningful conversations and collaborate effectively with their peers. This enhanced social integration and facilitated the development of interpersonal skills such as empathy, active listening, and cooperation. Conversely, students with lower levels of English language competency in listening skills faced challenges in expressing themselves and participating actively in social interactions. They often exhibited frustration and reluctance to engage in English-mediated communication, which, in turn, affected their social integration within the classroom environment.

Role of Educators in Facilitating Language Development and Emotional Social Growth

Our research delved into the critical role played by educators in facilitating English language development and emotional social growth among early childhood education students (Plowman & McPake, 2013). The findings underscored the significance of teacher-student interactions and instructional approaches in shaping language proficiency and emotional social development.

Educators who adopted a supportive and encouraging approach towards language learning created a nurturing environment that fostered language development. Positive teacher-student relationships were observed to have a profound impact on students' confidence in using English for communication (Kinginger, 2013). Moreover, educators who actively promoted a culture of inclusivity and acceptance in the classroom were instrumental in mitigating language-related anxieties among students. In contrast, educators who solely focused on academic outcomes and neglected the emotional aspects of language learning were

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found to hinder language development and emotional social growth. Students in such environments often displayed apprehension towards speaking English and exhibited signs of emotional discomfort.

Best Practices and Strategies for Enhancing Language Competency in Listening Skills

The identification of best practices and strategies for enhancing English language competency in listening skills within early childhood education settings forms a significant component of this research (Utami et al., 2023). Through a synthesis of both qualitative data and the literature review, a range of effective pedagogical approaches emerged.

A. Interactive Learning Activities: Engaging students in interactive learning activities, such as storytelling, role-playing, and group discussions, emerged as a highly effective strategy for enhancing listening skills. These activities not only made learning enjoyable but also provided ample opportunities for students to listen and respond in English. **B. Multilingual Support**: Recognising and valuing students' multilingual backgrounds and providing support in their native languages when necessary were found to be beneficial. This approach alleviated language-related anxieties and encouraged students to take risks in using English. **C. Inclusive Classroom Environment**: Creating an inclusive and accepting classroom environment was identified as a best practice. This included celebrating linguistic diversity, promoting active listening, and encouraging peer collaboration. **D. Family Involvement**: Encouraging family involvement in language learning was found to be pivotal. Educators can provide parents with resources and guidance on how to support their child's English language development at home. **E. Professional Development**: Continuous professional development for educators to enhance their own language proficiency and teaching strategies is essential. Equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge enables them to be effective facilitators of language development. **F. Assessment and Feedback**: Regular assessment of students' language proficiency and constructive feedback can help identify areas for improvement and guide instructional practices.

The findings of this research shed light on the dynamic relationship between English language competency in listening skills and the emotional social development of young children in early childhood education. The study underscores the pivotal role of educators and instructional approaches in shaping language development and emotional growth. By identifying best practices and strategies, this research contributes valuable insights to the field of Applied Linguistics, Social Sciences, and Early Childhood Education, offering practical guidance for educators and policymakers striving to provide a holistic educational experience for young learners.

Discussions

The research findings presented in the previous section provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between English language competency, particularly in listening skills, and the emotional social development of young children in early childhood education. In this section, we will delve into the discussions arising from these findings and their implications for educators, policymakers, and the broader field of early childhood education.

Language Proficiency and Emotional Social Development

The research findings highlight the significant impact of English language proficiency, especially in listening skills, on the emotional social development of young children. Students with higher levels of listening skill competence demonstrated greater confidence in expressing their emotions and engaging in social interactions. This underscores the interconnectedness of language proficiency and emotional expression.

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The ability to communicate effectively in English not only facilitates self-expression but also enhances a child's capacity to empathise and connect with others (Sjunnesson, 2022). It provides a medium through which children can share their feelings, thoughts, and experiences, thus fostering a sense of belonging and social integration within the classroom environment. Conversely, students with limited English language proficiency in listening skills faced challenges in expressing themselves emotionally and engaging in social interactions. This finding underscores the potential emotional and social barriers that language limitations can impose on young learners.

Role of Educators

The role of educators emerged as a critical factor in shaping language development and emotional social growth among early childhood education students (Anggini & Rodliyah, 2020). Educators who adopted a supportive and encouraging approach towards language learning created a conducive environment for language development and emotional expression.

Positive teacher-student relationships were found to be instrumental in building students' confidence in using English. These relationships provided a sense of security and trust, encouraging students to take risks in expressing themselves. Moreover, educators who promoted inclusivity and acceptance in the classroom played a vital role in mitigating language-related anxieties among students.

On the other hand, educators who solely prioritised academic outcomes and neglected the emotional aspects of language learning inadvertently hindered language development and emotional social growth. Students in such environments often exhibited signs of reluctance and emotional discomfort, hindering their overall development.

Best Practices and Strategies

The identification of best practices and strategies for enhancing language competency in listening skills within early childhood education settings offers actionable insights for educators and policymakers. These practices are rooted in the research findings and the broader academic literature: 1) **Interactive Learning Activities**: Engaging students in interactive learning activities, such as storytelling, role-playing, and group discussions, emerged as highly effective strategies for enhancing listening skills. These activities not only made learning enjoyable but also provided ample opportunities for students to listen and respond in English. 2) **Multilingual Support**: Recognising and valuing students' multilingual backgrounds and providing support in their native languages when necessary were found to be beneficial. This approach alleviated language-related anxieties and encouraged students to take risks in using English. 3) **nclusive Classroom Environment**: Creating an inclusive and accepting classroom environment, which celebrated linguistic diversity, promoted active listening, and encouraged peer collaboration, was identified as a best practice. Such an environment fosters a sense of belonging and inclusivity among students. 4) **Family Involvement**: Encouraging family involvement in language learning was found to be pivotal. Educators can provide parents with resources and guidance on how to support their child's English language development at home. This collaborative approach enhances language acquisition outside the classroom. 5) **Professional Development**: Continuous professional development for educators to enhance their own language proficiency and teaching strategies is essential. Equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge enables them to be effective facilitators of language development. 6) **Assessment and Feedback**: Regular assessment of students' language proficiency and the provision of constructive feedback can help identify areas for improvement and guide instructional practices. This ensures that language development is monitored and supported throughout the learning process.

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Implications

The implications of these research findings extend beyond the confines of this study and hold relevance for various stakeholders within the field of early childhood education: 1) **Educators**: Educators can benefit from a deeper understanding of the profound impact they have on students' language development and emotional social growth. The findings underscore the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships and creating inclusive classroom environments that support linguistic diversity. 2) **Curriculum Developers**: Curriculum developers can incorporate the identified best practices and strategies into early childhood education programmes. This includes designing curriculum materials that promote interactive learning activities and providing resources for family involvement in language learning. 3) **Policymakers**: Policymakers in the field of education can consider the implications of this research when formulating language education policies. Supporting professional development for educators and promoting multilingualism in early childhood education can be key policy initiatives. 4) **Parents**: Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's language development. Understanding the significance of language proficiency in emotional social growth can encourage parents to engage in activities that enhance their child's language skills at home.

Future Research Directions

While this research has provided valuable insights, there are avenues for further investigation in this field. Future research could explore the long-term effects of language proficiency in listening skills on academic achievement and career success. Additionally, comparative studies across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts can offer a broader perspective on the relationship between language development and emotional social growth.

This research illuminates the profound connection between English language competency, particularly in listening skills, and the emotional social development of young children in early childhood education. The findings underscore the pivotal role of educators and the importance of creating inclusive classroom environments. Furthermore, the identified best practices and strategies offer practical guidance for educators and policymakers striving to enhance language development and emotional social growth in early childhood education settings.

Conclusion

In the pursuit of understanding the intricate relationship between English language competency, specifically in listening skills, and the emotional social development of young children in the context of early childhood education, this research has uncovered a wealth of insights that hold profound implications for educators, policymakers, parents, and researchers alike. The assessment of English language competency among early childhood education students revealed a diverse range of proficiency levels, influenced by factors such as exposure to English outside the classroom and the pedagogical approaches employed by educators. This variability underscores the need for tailored language development strategies that acknowledge individual differences and the importance of a holistic approach to language learning. The research findings further illuminated the substantial impact of language proficiency on emotional social development. Students with higher levels of listening skill competence displayed enhanced emotional expression and social integration, while those with limited proficiency encountered barriers to effective communication and emotional expression. This underscores the interconnectedness of language and emotional development, emphasising the vital role of language in shaping the emotional landscapes of young learners.

The role of educators emerged as pivotal, with positive teacher-student relationships and inclusive classroom environments serving as catalysts for language development and emotional social growth. Educators who fostered a supportive and encouraging atmosphere created the conditions for students to thrive in their language learning journey. Moreover, the

identification of best practices and strategies for enhancing language competency in listening skills within early childhood education settings offers actionable guidance for educators and policymakers. These practices, including interactive learning activities, multilingual support, and family involvement, hold the potential to enrich language acquisition experiences and support emotional social development. This research contributes to our understanding of the profound and intricate relationship between language proficiency, emotional social development, and early childhood education. The implications of these findings resonate across the educational landscape, underscoring the need for nurturing language competence as an integral component of holistic child development. As we move forward, it is imperative that educators, policymakers, and parents recognise the significance of language in shaping the emotional and social landscapes of young learners and continue to explore innovative approaches to support their linguistic and emotional growth. Ultimately, by prioritising language development in early childhood education, we empower the next generation with the tools to express themselves, connect with others, and navigate the complexities of the world with confidence and competence.

Acknowledgment

The author thank all those who helped carry out this research, especially all lecturers and researchers in Doctoral of Applied Linguistic of State University of Jakarta (UNJ) as well as some researchers who help for advice and suggestions in Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran – Jakarta and Moriah Seminary of Theology (STT Moriah).

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